

URBAN FORM

The Denny Triangle Neighborhood Plan seeks to move its community toward a diverse, mixed-use character that provides a transit/pedestrian-friendly atmosphere.

Over the next 5 to 10 years, the Denny Triangle will experience dramatic changes to its character and form. Change will almost certainly include significant public investment that can both complement and stimulate parallel private investment. Two factors will influence the character and form of our neighborhood: The City's Comprehensive Plan and construction of the United States Federal Courthouse facility.

The City's Comprehensive Plan projections for the Triangle target growth of an additional 3,778 residential households and 23,600 new jobs by the year 2014. In response, the Denny Triangle Neighborhood Plan envisions the transformation of parking lots and underutilized parcels into a mix of commercial office buildings, high density residential, hotel and hospital-ity functions, and retail activities located adjacent to the downtown office and retail cores. While the area has long been seen as the natural extension of the downtown office core, it has only recently been discussed as an area appropriate to absorb future residential growth in the city as a high density residential neighborhood with its own unique character.

Streets and Walkways:

Developing a livable neighborhood in the Triangle will require creating a "sense of place" for residents and workers alike. Key to the development of a sense of place in the Triangle is creation of a "neighborhood" within the noisy hustle and bustle of this downtown area. What distinguishes an urban "neighborhood" from the general urban development is providing vital streets – the connective tissue of the community. As elaborated in the Downtown Plan, the vitality of the streets is determined by:

- Buildings and architectural features--character, height and scale.
- The nature of new business—public or private.
- Street Level character – active facades, weather protection, street trees and other landscaping.
- Street Level uses -- retail and service uses.
- Open Space -- In the Denny Triangle, 'civic' is the more apt term for the purpose and character of open space. Public or private, soft or hard, green or paved passive or active, above or at-grade, the open space serves a dynamic, vital role in the quality day and night life of the Neighborhood.
- History – and a sense of place.

These streets would promote pedestrian activities that are in turn conducive to both office workers and resi-

dents. In cities with high-density neighborhoods such as San Francisco, Vancouver BC or Portland, the street becomes an outdoor "living room" where residents or workers meet and pass the time. Lined with small retail uses, services and restaurants, these streets can enhance both the office and residential environment.

Creation of these streets will require regulatory incentives, pioneering developer zeal, continued economic growth and quality urban design to carve out a neighborhood. Several strategies are already outlined in the Downtown Plan under Urban Form. The policies identified in the Downtown Plan are generally applicable to the Denny Triangle neighborhood.

Public Sector Development

The Denny Triangle Neighborhood seeks to capitalize on its considerable assets such as its proximity to the downtown business core. It has pedestrian friendly terrain, and an emerging public transportation system that will make one of the most desirable transit-oriented communities in the entire region. It is increasingly rich in entertainment and leisure-time activities that are automobile-dependent and its capacity to comfortably host a wide variety of activities and uses without destroying its neighborhood scale and identity. As a result, this neighborhood sees a benefit from the siting of a new United States

Courthouse facility within its boundaries, provided critical mitigation measures are used which add to, and complement, the Neighborhood's emerging vision of itself.

Policy: Street Trees

Install Street Trees throughout Neighborhood:

As in other parts of Downtown Seattle, street trees are a relatively recent phenomenon, with the first street

trees probably installed with the monorail extension, in the early 1960s. Later city-sponsored tree plantings include plantings along Stewart Street, probably in the 1970s, and extensive plantings west of Westlake Boulevard, in the 1990s. Other tree plantings are directly the result of open space policies guiding private improvements in the Neighborhood, including development of new office, commercial and residential projects, and at-grade parking lots. The large area

west of Westlake Boulevard and north of Olive Way, with the exception of Stewart Street, is nearly devoid of trees, due to lack of recent development in the area.

***Near Term Goal:
Install Gateway
Markers:***

Gateway elements such as public art, hanging baskets, signs and banners are important to give identity to the neighborhood.

Locations: Denny and Stewart,

Dexter and Denny, Westlake and Denny (see also Gateways, below)

Policy: Major New Open Spaces

In the Denny Triangle, 'civic' is the more apt term for the purpose and character of open space. Public or private, soft or hard, green or paved, passive or active, above or at-grade, the open space serves a dynamic, vital role in the quality day and night life of the Neighborhood.

Existing parks generally lie outside the Triangle:

- Denny Park just north of Denny, is the City's oldest park
 - Commons Playground, adjacent to Denny Park, with a basketball court and field, is the only active recreation park for a large area
 - Westlake Park, at Westlake Center, is an urban plaza serving as a focal point for the Downtown
 - Washington State Convention Center and Freeway Park, a series of roof gardens and walks, connecting Downtown and Capitol/First Hill across the Freeway
- In the Triangle, two small wedges at the terminus of Westlake represent the only public park space and it largely functions as a traffic island.

Develop Westlake Circle at the terminus of Westlake Boulevard:

Identified in the Downtown Plan, development of a major new open space at Westlake Circle

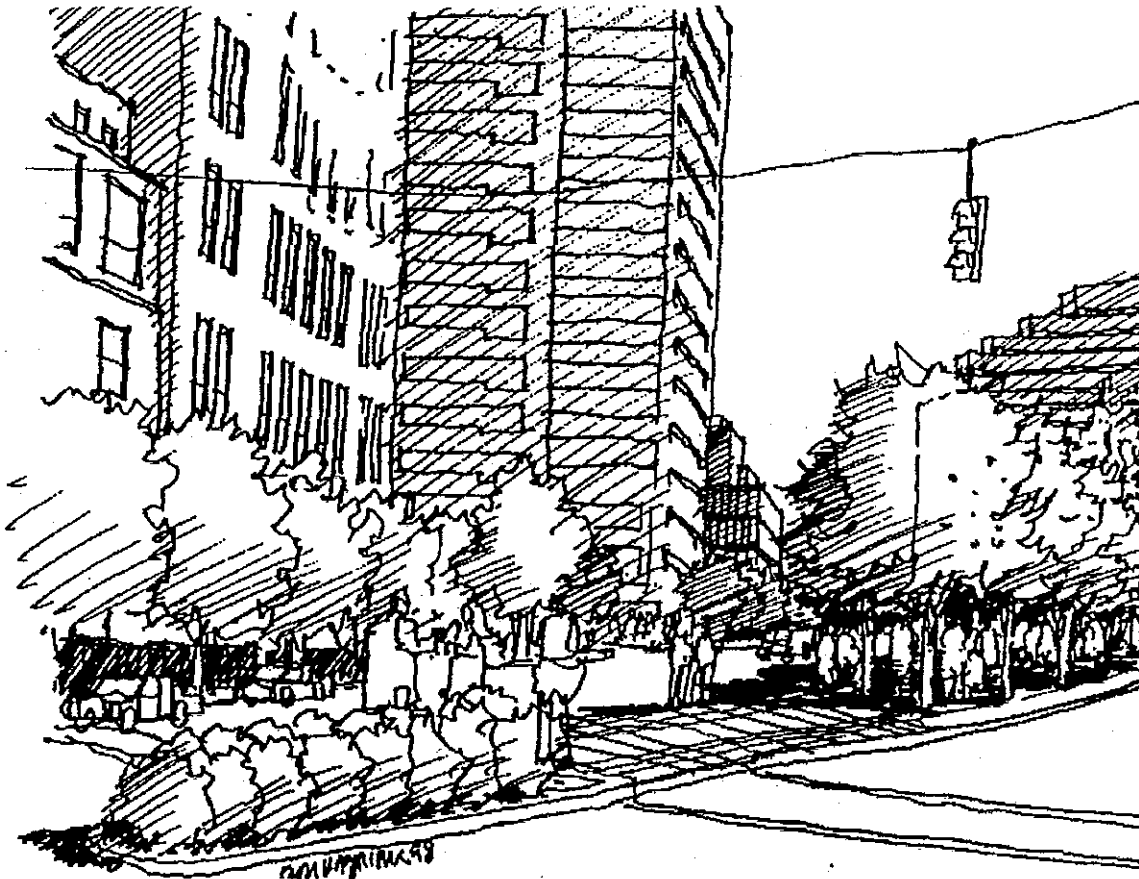


should provide a formal approach to downtown and celebration of Westlake. The project can serve as a catalyst for improvement of the Westlake Corridor.

Develop the Olive/Howell Wedge Park:

The Olive Howell wedge can serve as a valuable green island for pedestrians crossing from the Convention Center Station to the 9th Avenue/Terry Avenue Green streets.

Near Term Goal: Develop Pocket Park



Long Term Goal: Community Garden

In accordance with the downtown urban center plan, Denny Triangle will partner with the City to identify a land purchase to develop into a community garden.

Policy: Associated Spaces—Open Space in New Public Projects

United States Federal Courthouse Mitigation:

The environmental impact statement for the United States Courthouse project indicates a need to provide substantial mitigation in the form of significant investments in neighborhood-friendly enhancements. Such enhancements would improve and strengthen the integration of this facility into the surrounding community.

The Denny Triangle community's vision is to function as a business/employment center as well as a diverse

multi-dimensional residential community. How the Denny Triangle community becomes an ideal host community for the federal courthouse project will, ultimately, be determined by the willingness of federal agencies and the City of Seattle to provide adequate mitigation to minimize the intrusive aspects of such a large scale development.

The following strategic initiatives need to be considered to assure that adequate mitigation steps are taken in connection with this project:

- The General Services Administration (GSA) assures that mitigation measures specified in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) are implemented.
- Significant public investment be made in infrastructure.
- The GSA seeks to create a strong, positive environment and forum that will prove beneficial to the realization of the Neighborhood Plan.

The FEIS identifies adverse impacts in the form of reductions in the supply of low-income housing in the Denny Triangle. The selected site will result in the displacement of residential units in the Love Building, as well as a small number of businesses currently serving the Neighborhood. If at all possible, relocation should be within the Denny Triangle.

It should be noted also, that the siting of the courthouse is expected to bring more than 620 federal employees into the Denny Triangle

Neighborhood, thus resulting in a significant positive impact on overall employment goals for the Neighborhood. In bringing new employees to the neighborhood, GSA must recognize the following concerns:

1. That the Triangle neighborhood is deficient in park and green space. The GSA should maximize the use of street trees, green space and design elements to create a sense of peacefulness, and complement the highly urban character of the Triangle Neighborhood.
2. Reduce and calm traffic around the federal courthouse to allow the residential character of the neighborhood to emerge from the shadow of the predominant commercial character of the present day community. The addition of traffic calming devices could serve to reinforce the notion of the Triangle Neighborhood as a multi-use community.
3. Foster the development of multi-income housing stock in this neighborhood to encourage its maturation as a diverse multi-faceted and vibrant 24-hour neighborhood.
4. Target Neighborhood residents for job opportunities to further strengthen the resident employment bases of this community.
5. Address the need for resident-friendly public facilities, such as child care facilities within the Denny Triangle.

Public Transit:

The Convention Center, and Ninth and Pine Transit Center were developed under guidelines that new projects shall include significant public open space. In the development of future projects, the quantity and quality of open space should be clearly defined early to ensure the projects increase the amount of meaningful open space in the neighborhood. Anticipating plans and proposals for public developments, the Neighborhood can have a strong voice in their development, including:

- Development of Air Rights over Convention Place RTA Station for public uses, including open space
- Provide Open Space as part of the New Federal Courthouse Project

Policy: Special Triangles -- Gateways

Redevelop small triangles as gateway elements: Gateways are the major entrances to a district – Denny Triangle itself serves as a major gateway to the City of Seattle and several points are key gateways into the neighborhood and downtown. Coincident with these locations, the Triangle is made up of small triangles, which make for low property values, but high visibility and accessibility. With vacating of underused right-of-ways, etc., and patterned pavements spanning streets, triangles can become gateways:

- Denny/Westlake Gateway – Provide Improved Pedestrian Access to Denny Park & Playfield
- Aurora at Denny and 7th Avenue

- Stewart Street at Denny Way and I-5

Policy: Special Streets

Redevelop Westlake Boulevard as a linear urban design element:

It is a long-standing policy repeated in the Downtown Plan that Westlake Boulevard shall be developed as a linear urban design element to provide a pedestrian amenity, and form a functional and visual linkage from the downtown core to Lake Union.

As Westlake cuts across the grid, it opens up a series of blocks that collectively could contribute to a very positive open space environment. However, improvements on Westlake have been largely restricted to installation of unifying stand of street trees (Horsechestnut). Unlike many of the other planned improvements, tied to parcel development, improvement of Westlake must be a City-sponsored effort that should be tied to utility transportation and other infrastructure improvements.

Westlake Boulevard should be redeveloped as a linear urban design element to provide a pedestrian amenity, and form a functional and visual linkage from the downtown core to the lake. Following from the 1995 Pine Street Advisory Task Force Report, a similar task force should be established for Westlake. Proposed improvements include:

- Develop a landscaped boulevard with bike lanes and with widened sidewalks

- Gateway/Terminus at Westlake Circle (see above)
- Vacate street connections at 7th Avenue and Blanchard Street as shown in the 1995 Downtown Plan, and/or at 9th Avenue or Lenora Street to provide the opportunity to steer away traffic and establish pedestrian enclaves (see below)
- Provide incentives for Boulevard-related amenities extending to all intersected blocks

Implement Pine Street Improvements:

Commitments and Actions identified by the 1995 Pine Street Advisory Task Force Report should be extended through the Denny Triangle, including:

- Gateway element at I-5
- Comprehensive street tree planting
- Comprehensive street furniture
- Enhanced night lighting

Improve Denny Way:

The major edge to the Neighborhood, with high visibility and few amenities.

Near Term Goal: Improve Alleys

Trash, sweeping, security, etc. can improve alleys and can be addressed by small Business Improvement Associations (BIAs) to turn current liabilities into areas for outdoor dining, shops, etc.

Near Term Goal: City to Provide Additional Alley Lighting

Additional alley lighting will encourage pedestrian use, reduce crime and encourage retail or other alternative uses. Locations: alleys between Boren and Virginia and between Terry and Boren. Light behind the Julia Apartments

Policy: Green Streets

Designate 9th Avenue as a Green Street to create a Green Street "Couplet" with Terry Avenue.

Bell and Blanchard Streets, already designated Green Streets in the Downtown, serve as a "couplet" that can begin to anchor a neighborhood west of Westlake. East of Westlake, Terry Avenue is a designated Green Street and helps to anchor the nascent residential community. Designating 9th Avenue, one block south, as a green street will create a second couplet, which will strengthen the neighborhood. Including 9th Avenue as a Green Street would provide a pedestrian enhanced environment that would link the residential enclave with the Convention Center Station and the future Sound Transit Light Rail. These couplets begin to establish area "sense of place" to promote this live-work neighborhood as well as providing much needed open space and a green visual relief to the hard surfaces of the city.

Develop Designated Green Streets:

Development of Terry and 9th Avenues and Bell and Blanchard Streets could include widening and landscaping of sidewalks, limiting of traffic to local access,

closing certain street ends to divert traffic and the development of "common thread" streetscape elements such as street furniture, street lights, paving, banners signage and public art to tie the area together with a unique character.

Designation of a Green Street alone will not establish these neighborhood arteries. Current incentives for the development of these Green Streets include additional floor area bonuses to projects abutting the street. Another mechanism for implementation is the City's Community Development Program, a policy in the Downtown Plan that can direct development resources to areas of the city to encourage residential development. This technique was used along Second Avenue for streetscape improvements. To date, the only green street improvements in the Denny Triangle is the planting of street trees along Bell and Blanchard Streets.

Form a Green Street design team.

The Denny Triangle Neighborhood Association will partner with the City to create a mechanism for green street development. Under the City's "Green Streets Ordinance" the Design Team will:

- Determine how a plan is implemented so projects are built in planned stages, not piecemeal. Also determine what technical studies need to be undertaken.
- Create a neighborhood-based priority system with consideration given to funding, most needy area, and most relevant local development.
- Consider opportunities for creative design